The Old Master Again Occupies the Foreground

Why the Morgan Raphael Is a Boon to the American Public—A Group of Venetian Paintings—The Lambert Collection.

By ROYAL CORTISSOZ.

The salient works of art exhibited here thus far in the season have nearly all been of modern origin. Now there is a momentary change, the old master coming to the front with something of the prestige which has marked him in recent winters in New York. It is chiefly at the Metropolitan Museum that this is to be noted. Ancient Egypt prevails there, in the great tomb of Perneb just installed. The more important of the other late accessions, Mr. Morgan's gifts, announced in The Tribune last Thursday, are, to be sure, familiar things, long ago placed on view. But they take on renewed interest as permanent possessions of the community. It is exhilarating to know that the Mediæval and Renaissance wing of the Hoentschel collection is forever secured to us. It contains superb examples of architectural and decorative design. It is at once a well spring of beauty for the layman and a source of practical inspiration for the craftsman. On the surface, indeed, it would appear to be of far greater value than the Colonna Raphael, Mr. Morgan's other benefaction. But it is only on the surface that such an impression may be supported. There are some golden lessons, perennially fresh, in this famous painting.

The Precious Gift of Composition.

In conversation with an accomplished American artist the present writer once ventured to cite as an aid to argument a certain portrait by Raphael. "Oh, yes," was the reply. "That's a fine thing. I am well acquainted with it. But it hardly applies, for, of course, Raphael didn't know how to paint. That sort of stuff is all very well and we need it in the museums, but it has nothing to do with modern art." It is an old story. There are many artists who think in that curious fashion. Raphael didn't know anything about brushwork as we understand it, he knew nothing about light, he painted according to a diagram, and so on and so on. The amusing thing is that all this is quite true. But even more amusing is it to observe that he was nevertheless a great painter, at whose feet the cleverest follower of Manet, say, or Whistler, might profitably sit. Great painting does not consist of brushwork alone, priceless as that may be, nor does it rest entirely upon the impressionistic hypothesis. It includes all manner of equally important traits, and some of these Raphael possessed in an abundance which is vouchsafed only to genius.

Let us, to begin with, look at the Colonna "Madonna" in its weakest aspects. It was painted at an early transitional period in the master's career. He had not yet thrown off the tradition of Perugino's studio; the pupil retains the manner of his teacher especially in the matter of drawing, and he preserves, too, that curious immobility which belonged to the Umbrian school at the time of his apprenticeship. The color, though not without a certain richness, hardly proclaims the great colorist, and time has but exaggerated its rather hard character. The bloom of this picture disappeared long before the memory of living man. Some centuries ago the nuns in whose convent it then was desired to sell it not only in order to settle some debts but "because the surface in some parts was flaking away." Even the Raphael of that period is not to-day represented in it at his best. But it still justifies the tribute of his definitive biographers, Crowe and Cavalcaselle, who speak of "the monumental attitudes, the breadth of the forms, the grace and beauty of the females, and the grand style of the draperies." These are qualities that never lose their value for the modern artist who can see beyond his nose, who is not besotted in the provincialism of imagining that art began when he discovered Paris.

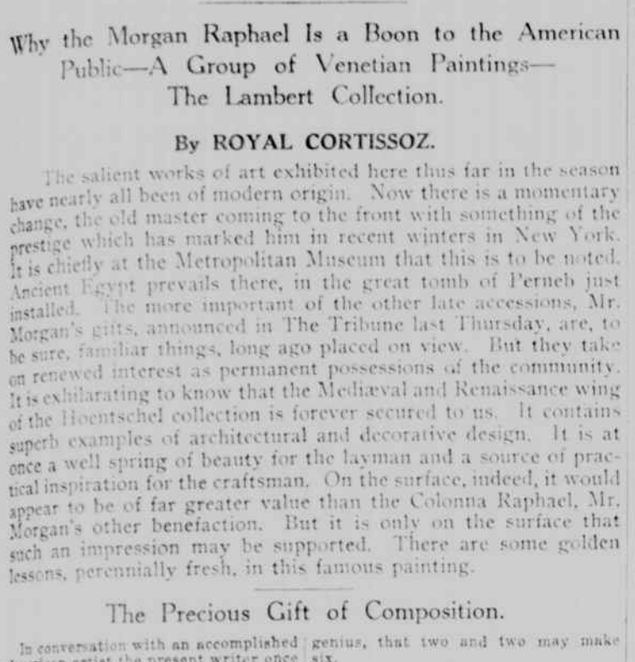
It is droll, too, to reflect that so many of the disparagers of Raphael in the studios were glad enough to emulate his principles when the latter were offered to them with a French trade mark. We were discussing in this place not long since the debt American art owes to teachers like Gerome, citing his great picture, "Son Eminence Grise," as typical of the sound workmanship which he inculcated. That was precisely what Raphael put into the Colonna "Madonna." We hailed it when it first appeared at the museum as a masterpiece of majestic design, as a triumph of linear art, and we so hail it again, rejoicing in the rebuke it administers to the so-called "advanced" painters of the hour who fancy that they can neglect the rudiments of technique. They think that technique is summed up in forcible brushwork. It does not exist until it includes honest draughtsmanship, and, above all, design. Raphael's design in this picture is no doubt formal, diagrammatic, whole parasangs removed from the atmosphere of what we call realism. But it is strong and of beautiful design, and in its very simplicity it gives the student an immediate clew to the subject. Let him learn from the young Raphael how to demonstrate that two and two make four. Then, by and by, he may with the more readiness and with the more hope of success, proceed toward the great artist's great triumph, that of showing, by the sheer power of genius, that two and two may make six.

Lavinia, the daughter of Titian, was one of his favorite models. He painted her in one of the loveliest of his works, the portrait of a maiden in white, holding a curious fan, which hangs in the gallery at Dresden. Again he painted her, unmistakably several years later, in the picture at Berlin, wherein she uplifts a salver full of fruits. Repeating the design in a canvas which adorns the Prado, he substituted for the fruits a grisly memento, "Salome with the Head of St. John," this version is called in the catalogue. Evidently he was charmed with the motive, which well brought out the grace of his beloved child. Clad in brocade, wearing rich jewels, she turns her face to the beholder at just the right angle. Her arms and hands are so posed as to give the last touch of picturesque movement to the composition. It is no wonder that he returned to the latter more than once. In an exhibition of four or five old Venetian pictures at the Ehrich gallery another example of it turns up, this time reproducing the Berlin version, and with it there is a companion portrait of an older, more buxom, type.

They are accompanied by brief "authentications," of the sort which some of the European critics have of late years made so familiar amongst the dealers, statements in which Mr. F. M. Perkins and Mr. Charles Loeser express favorable opinions on the subject. Professor Cavenaughi is also quoted, to him being also attributed the idea that the "Lavinia" is the first representation of this subject painted by the master. These souvenirs of "expertise" have their interest—though the episode of the wax bust has rather shaken their pontifical authority—but in such cases, of course, the picture is the thing. These two are good pictures, sumptuous in form, almost if not quite sumptuous in color. The glorious power, the effulgence, of Titian we miss somehow. On the other hand no master, old or modern, with the possible exception of Vermeer of Delft, has ever struck twelve on every occasion. The present examples record pedestrian moments. They do not take us captive, but neither do they fail to give a certain pleasure. More definitely persuasive is the third Titian (duly ratified by Dr. Bode and Dr. Gronau), the "Portrait of Chancellor Andrea Franschi." It is a handsome bust, interesting both as a piece of painting and as a study of character. As pendants to the group there are two charming portraits by Paris Bordone, one of Lavinia in her childhood and the other, "La Bella," one of those rather free figures which belong to the essentially material side of Venetian art. The collection as a whole leaves a very agreeable impression.

The impending exhibition at the American Art Galleries of the collection formed by Mr. Catholina Lambert, later to be sold at auction, will lay great stress upon the old masters. There are modern pictures, of course, in this gathering of nearly four hundred works of art, pictures of all the schools. The list opens with a couple of paintings by Verestchagin. Then there are numerous specimens of the Barbizon and Impressionist schools, of Monticelli, of the American Blakelock, and many others. One of the most enticing things in the modern wing is the production of a Frenchman too little known here, Marcelin Desboutins. Puvis, too, has his place. Nevertheless, looking over an advance copy of the catalogue, we have been struck by the interest which develops when the old masters begin. They include an unusually promising group of Italian Primitives and a long list of such painters as Botticelli, Del Sarto, Sebastiano del Piombo, Cima da Conegliano, Luini, and so on down to Bronzino and Tiepolo. The Dutch, Flemish and British schools are voluminously represented and there is a quite surprising array of old Spanish paintings. Altogether the opening of the show on the 12th will be awaited with keen interest. Mr. Lambert's collection has always had a wide repute and it will be stimulating to come face to face with it.

ALONG THE RIVER
(From the picture by Arthur Crisp in the Water Color Society's Exhibition.)



LAVINIA, THE DAUGHTER OF TITIAN
(From the portrait by Titian at Berlin.)

CHANCELLOR ANDREA FRANSCHI
(From the portrait by Titian at the Ehrich Gallery.)

Random Impressions of Art in Current Exhibitions

The American Water Color Society—War Posters at the Grolier Club—Pissarro, in More than One Phase—A Disciple of La Farge's.

By ROYAL CORTISSOZ.

Another exhibition has been opened for the benefit of the Fraternite des Artistes. This one, held at the Seligmann gallery, is formed of paintings, drawings, lithographs, etc., lent by Mr. A. E. Gallatin. He is a connoisseur of essentially modern tendencies, and his souvenirs are of such types as Forain, Steinlen, Degas, Whistler, Mary Cassatt, Ernest Lawson, John Sargent, Alden Weir, Everett Shinn and John Sloan. It is a piquant company. At the Montross gallery there has just opened an exhibition of fifty pictures by fifty Americans. Paintings by Mr. Jules Guerin and decorations by Mr. Elmer MacRae are at the Macbeth gallery. The Blue Dome Fraternity shows paintings by Miss Dewing Woodward, the Thumb Box gallery paintings and drawings by Mr. Wood Gaylor, and the National Society of Craftsmen three decorative panels by Mr. J. W. Fosdick, which are to go into the grill room of the National Arts Club. The League is in possession at the Fine Arts Building. The Association of Women Painters and Sculptors opens its annual show at the old Blakeslee gallery to-morrow morning.

New Works in Every Medium.

The American Water Color Society is holding its annual exhibition at the National Arts Club. One striking thing about it is the striving after decorative effect, so clearly shown in many of the pictures. This, with the exception of the remarkably high level of merit, impressed us more than any other characteristic. There are a large number of pictures by Jane Peterson and Felicie Waldo Howell. We group them together because of the similarity of their work. Miss Peterson's has, perhaps, more strength than Miss Howell's, but they are both vigorous and interesting in technique. Chauncey F. Ryder contributes three pictures. "The Little White House in Winter" is painted in lovely soft grays and is rather unusual in arrangement. One feels that, in the two very tall trees, he has stretched truth to advantage. There are two pictures by Arthur Crisp, of course highly decorative in treatment. "Along the River" shows two women in full-skirted costumes strolling in pensive attitudes. "The Dancing Act" is one of his more usual joyous footlight subjects.

One of Alethea H. Platt's contributions, "A Brittany Home," is an interestingly lighted peasant interior, with strong notes of green. Mary Langtry's "Palisades of the Hudson" shows a modern German influence both in color and layout. "The Quai Verte, Bruges," by Charles Warren Eaton, has a great deal of romance and calm in its rich, velvety browns. If it were not quite so patchy in treatment, Roy Brown's "Boats, Low Tide," would be a fine picture. As it is, it is a bit too spotty for comfort. Robert C. Chadeayne sends a good picture in "The Mill," which only just falls short of being thoroughly satisfactory because of its too predominant horizontal lines. "The Title Page," by Claude R. Hirst, is so detailed as to be absolutely painful. A group of J. Alden Weirs are of great delicacy and charm. Among other noteworthy pictures is W. Granville Smith's "Old Philadelphia," which receives the Hudnut Prize and is certainly a very good water color.

The particular thought which strikes one, on seeing the exhibition of war posters at the Grolier Club is that Frank Brangwyn has been inspired by the present conflict to some of his greatest work. The posters by this British artist, of which there are some seven or eight, are magnificent. Few men have ever so well understood the possibilities of color suggestion in black and white and made use of it in such telling masses. Everybody knows Brangwyn's large, decorative etchings and lithographs. These posters are of the same type, but finer than most, as if he had been stirred to the depths of his being by the task in hand. His style is well adapted to large spaces, and he has taken advantage of the chance to produce big pictures. The one in the centre of the right-hand wall is perhaps the most effective. It is without a title and shows three figures grouped together in the right foreground with a confused mass, back of them, of huddled forms and ruined buildings. The poster called "The Only Road for an Englishman" is also striking in its arrangement and a certain grim glamour of war. A large colored poster, entitled "Take Up the Sword of Justice," shows a symbolic female figure rising out of the sea and holding forth a sword in a scabbard, while behind her is seen the sinking Lusitania.

Of quite a different type are the French posters. They are not really so effective, though the drawing is above reproach. "The Orphans' Day" is probably the most striking. The figures are drawn with too much delicacy to have the strength and telling effect which one would desire in this type of work.

Most of the posters consist of merely lettering, or of pictures which lack any great artistic merit, but they are all of deep human interest.

Year after year a cycle of little exhibitions at the Durand-Ruel gallery illustrates the art of the French impressionists, bringing back old friends, introducing unfamiliar pictures, and, in the process, showing rather entertainingly how this school has taken on a kind of patina. Once it savored of revolution. Now, in the midst of cubistic and other horrors, it spells something like conservatism. The current show is given to Pissarro, who began by painting under the influence of Corot, developed still further through contact with Manet and Monet, later borrowed a little inspiration from Cézanne—and all the time managed to strike a note very much his own, placid, sweet, charming. The eighteen examples in the present group reflect the different windings in his path, from the "Village aux Environs de Mantes," dated 1870, which might have been done for the Salon in the good old days of gray studio light, to pictures of the late nineties and the period just prior to his death, when he was in full command of the warm luminosity most characteristic of his work. He employed a rich yet delightfully well controlled scale of color. His landscapes have a very mellow, harmonious beauty. Pastoral as he was, too, in the grain of his art, he had also an engaging sympathy for urban motives. Some of the best of the pictures here are of Parisian scenes. He is a restful, friendly type.

The month's exhibition at the MacDowell Club is more interesting than the average. It contains sculpture as well as painting. William N. Taylor shows three sand dune pictures which are quite charming in their gray coloring. His sea piece with the figure of a man bathing is highly decorative. There are two good summer landscapes by Andrew T. Schwartz. The "June Day" is classical in design, if not in technique. His method of painting is smooth and agreeable. "Baby Love," by Katherine B. Stetson, is simple and effective in arrangement and is painted with all the tenderness which the subject requires. Her other pictures, though pleasing, do not carry conviction. Robert K. Ryland's "The Huntress" is a good decoration. The painting is flat and the design well thought out. The figure of the huntress in red is a clever and telling note. His other decorative pictures lack spontaneity. Lillian Link's tiny children are delightfully mischievous bronze figures. They are charming little elves, which one would like to keep near at hand against a fit of the blues.

There are some pleasant landscapes by L. Mazzanovich at the City Club. The color is good and they are well painted, except that in one or two cases they are a trifle hard. The picture called "Spring" is particularly attractive, done in alluring pinks, lavenders and blues, with a good, pale sky. "The River of Certitude" would be satisfactory were the effect not a bit scratchy and did the surface of the stream not appear to tilt suddenly toward the lower left-hand corner of the canvas. Sometimes Mr. Mazzanovich errs on the side of prettiness, as in "Invocation," which has too much of this quality. The paintings as a whole are, however, above the average in merit.

Two artists are showing at the Folsom gallery. One room is hung with the work of Harry L. Hoffman. His pictures are apt to contain fine, strong sunlight, a good out of doors feeling and pleasant colors. "The Sun Bridge, Toledo," and "The Jucar, Cuenca," have a good deal of the romance of Spain, and are pleasing in color and arrangement. "Noon Hour, Washington," has a fine feeling of space and is an interesting subject. A good winter scene is "On the Connecticut," in which the artist has made a clever arrangement of the stream. "Primroses" is finely sunlit, but the diagonal line is too marked, and cuts the picture too sharply in two.

The other artist showing here is John Wenger. He is a man of strong imagination and his canvases are, for the most part, fantasies done in beautiful, rich opalescent colors. His light is brilliant and his shadows luminous. There are no sharp lines. Everything is indistinct, suggestive and decorative. Even his landscapes, which are perfectly true, have these same characteristics. It is seldom that one meets with a fantasist of such resource.

Mr. A. G. Schulman, art instructor at the College of the City of New York, is holding an exhibition of his drawings and paintings at the Arlington Gallery. In both mediums he shows a predilection for dark, sombre masses. His subjects are, for the most part, trees made picturesque through years of battling with sea winds. In his paintings his color is rich and vibrant, sometimes showing a likeness to Blakelock. The canvases are very similar, the same group of trees being used many times; but in some he seems to be striving for a decorative effect, while in others he appears to be content with a type of painting in vogue twenty years ago. In "Edge of the Woods, No. 2," the handling is freer than in the others and the color pleasant. It is one of his most successful pictures, but the one which charmed us most was "Nauyeaug, Mason's Island." Its soft, low-keyed gray-green color is beautiful and the handling is very atmospheric. The painting is filled with peace. We have seen Mason's Island painted in many ways by many artists, but no one of them has made us wish to see it for ourselves as much as Mr. Schulman.

At the gallery of Samuel Schwartz's Sons & Co. are some paintings by Joseph Oliver Olsen. In some of them there is a satisfactory feeling of air and light, but the color is not, on the whole, striking, and the handling is sometimes hard. "Study of an Old Man" is a rather good portrait sketch, but is strongly reminiscent of art by the same, shows a crouching man-brute and a great dog lurking in the shadow. It is painted in the same tones as "The Patriots," and is possibly even more effective.

Since the death of John La Farge there has been no work done in stained glass reviving his tradition. His genius cannot be replaced. But he left an inspiration behind him, evidences of which crop out in the two windows designed by Mr. E. H. Blashfield and executed by Miss Grace Edith Barnes for the First Presbyterian Church at Chattanooga. Mr. Blashfield has not hitherto done any work in this field. Attacking a new problem he has found his securest resource in simplicity. In that one of the two windows which was set up for exhibition purposes the other day the subject of the Annunciation is treated in almost severe terms, the two standing figures being troubled with no symbolical accessories. They have great dignity, a certain linear fineness and force. The border, a true architectural pattern, is a notable factor in the ensemble, one of the finest things of the kind we have seen in years. Miss Barnes, a disciple of La Farge's, long his secretary and associated with him in the studio, has emulated him in the handling of the medium to which he gave a new significance. The reds and blues of her draperies are masses of sombrely glowing tone. The flowers against the sky in the background gleam like jewels, in something of the old La Fargian sense. But chiefly Mr. Blashfield and Miss Barnes between them have recaptured a trace of that style of his which left a glass window a living thing of color, a painting in a very special, eloquent sort of substance. It is an interesting episode.

A feast for all lovers of the beautiful is the exhibition of Saracenic art at the gallery of Kouchakji Freres. There is a hypnotic quality about it. These specimens of glass, faience and rugs seize upon not only the eyes but the imagination. There are a number of Arabic enamelled glass beakers. The decoration, which is for the most part in bands, is superb. A Rakka flower vase of the ninth century is remarkable in that it is strongly Greek in shape, with the addition of purely Oriental multiple handles. Some of the large Rakka vases are like great white pearls, carved in relief. They have a haunting, almost unreal quality. Cuno Iettering is wonderfully decorative and a great asset in Rakka pottery. It is used with telling effect on many of the pieces. One large vase has both a band of Cufic and one of Arabic lettering. The Rhodian plates are magnificent, strong in coloring and design. A particularly remarkable example has a representation of the sun on it. The plate is rather unusual in shape, lacking the ordinary rather broad, flat edge. There are a large number of delicately decorated Persian specimens, some delightful Syro-Egyptian pieces and a few Hispano-Mauresque, among them a fine oblong tray in rich blue and copper lustre. Two carved wood architraves have strong classical feeling, and the rugs are of great beauty. The most remarkable of the latter is the fragment of a thirteenth century animal rug, with a strong, rather primitive design containing a large variety of birds and beasts.

At the Goupil gallery are pictures by Emelene Abbey Dunn and Harriet S. Phillips. They are both artists of merit, who work in a variety of media. Miss Dunn's "The Mountains" is a satisfactory wooded hillside in blues and purples. "The Storm" has a fine windy rush and atmosphere. The little "Island Road" is a peaceful picture, with the sky showing below the clouds at the horizon, and a good sense of evening calm. The two portraits are the least successful of her work. The most interesting things which Miss Phillips shows are her tempera paintings. She has used the medium with taste and has produced pictures having mystery, breadth, atmosphere and a decorative quality. The exhibition is one in a succession of shows by young artists of promise.

ST. CHRISTOPHER AND THE CHRIST CHILD
(From the painting by Cano in the Lambert Collection.)

MADONNA AND CHILD BETWEEN SAINTS
(From the painting by Giralamo da Santa Croce in the Lambert Collection.)

HEAD OF A MONK
(From the early Italian portrait in the Lambert Collection.)

PORTRAIT OF A LADY
(From the painting by Bronzino in the Lambert Collection.)

VILLAGE AUX ENVIRONS DE MANTES
(From the painting by Pissarro at the Durand-Ruel Gallery.)

From Indiana, but Not Literary.

"No, I don't long for literary fame because I'm from Indiana," said Orville Harrold. "Rather, to make my viewpoint clearer, suppose we transpose the phrases in that sentence, and state it this way: Because I'm from Indiana I don't long for literary fame. If I were from some other state I might, but out in Indiana there is too much competition.

"Not long ago," he went on, as he sat before the mirror in his dressing room at the Hippodrome, covering up some of his healthy tan with grease paint, "I attended a banquet of the Indiana Society in Chicago. I was about the only one present who was not an author. I know a good many of the writers out there—Riley and George Ade, and McCutcheon and the others—and they are good fellows. I don't want to compete with them, though, for I wouldn't have any show. I think I'll just keep on being Orville Harroid, tenor.

"But, pour l'amour de Michel (you see I speak French now), don't write the old stuff about me, to the effect that I was an Indiana farmer's boy, who moved to a town and learned a trade, and then broke into vaudeville, and was discovered by Hammerstein, who gave my heaven-born talent a chance to express itself in grand opera. I've never had an article written about me yet that some of that wasn't put in. It's true, but the time has come to write something else about me."

I promised not to say a word on the subject, and he continued:

"I was raised (I believe 'reared' is the better word) on a farm, all right, and I have just bought a farm up in New Hampshire, but not to work on. When I am not fishing there in the vacation season, I expect to be sitting on the veranda of the fine old house and contemplating the beauties of nature, which include a very picturesque lake not far distant. I wouldn't pretend to like farming if it would cause all the rural population of Indiana to come here and pay to hear me sing. As to Indiana itself, it is a good state, but I am not going back there to live. I agree with George Ade, who said, when some one remarked that so many bright people come from Indiana, that the brighter they were the quicker they came. That aroused some adverse criticism back home, and so at the next banquet he attended, George concluded his peroration on the state with these words: 'Dear old Indiana—I'll never go back on it or to it.'"

Mr. Harrold likes the acoustic properties of the Hippodrome and finds it no strain on his voice to sing there. He also thinks the audiences are much more sincere in their applause than grand opera auditors. His patriotic song, "My Land, My Flag," arouses great enthusiasm, and he believes that every one who applauds means it.